

Screening, Qualifying & Instructing Passengers



An AFC Coordinator or trained volunteer screens each prospective Passenger and companion to determine if the request is consistent with the mission of Angel Flight Central and meets all Passenger qualifications for a flight. The initial call is important to establishing rapport with the person calling and provides the first impression of AFC to the caller. The requester is instructed to **Request a Flight from the AFC website**. Screening proceeds from information on the mission request and missing information needed. Additional questions may be asked according to the responses given; especially if responses lead to concern for Passenger or Pilot safety. The following are the basic information discussed with people seeking transportation through AFC prior to creating a mission. How the Coordinator or Volunteer communicates with the Passenger is as important as acquiring this information and sets the stage for your communication with the Passenger for the mission.

REASON FOR TRAVEL & VERIFICATION OF REQUEST

- Does the request seem legitimate? If there is question, request to talk to a 3rd party for verification.
- How did the Passenger hear about Angel Flight Central?
- Have they reviewed the [Passenger Section](#) on the AFC website?
 - Requesters are asked to review the documents on the Passenger section of the AFC website including the [“What to Expect” video](#).
- What is the reason for travel and has an **appointment, destination** and **date of travel** been set?
- What is the **medical or compelling reason** for the trip? Why are they seeking assistance with transportation?
- How many people must travel to this appointment? Explain limitations of small aircraft.
- What is the **financial need**? What **alternatives** do they have for their travel?
 - How would they get to their appointment/destination if AFC is unable to fulfill their request? Do they have the means to pay for a commercial flight?
 - **Proof of financial need** is verified if there is any question about the legitimacy of the need.
- Verify medical **appointments, treatment facilities & destination contacts**.
 - Explain leg-distance and traveling the day before and after the appointment (if applicable)
- What is the **medical condition of each person** that will be flying? (patients & companions)
 - Can persons, with this medical condition, fly with the public?
 - Is the **releasing physicians’** name, phone and fax number on the request?
- Explain that AFC will obtain an [AFC Medical Release](#) for each person (patient & companions) with a medical condition. Approval to fly must be received from each person’s physician before a flight is finalized. A new medical release is required when a patient’s medical status changes or after one (1) year.
 - How could their medical condition impact the flight and safety for themselves, the Pilot or other Passengers? (i.e., seizures, loud noises, confined space with little leg room). Explain that Passengers may experience turbulence, engine noise and temperature changes during the flight and particularly during take-off and landing.

- Does the patient or companion(s) have a known contagious or communicable disease? Have they had a recent cold or ear infection? If so, explain how pressure at altitude affects individuals with congestion or an ear infection.
- Does any Passenger need **oxygen during flight**? If so discuss DOT-approved supplemental oxygen.
 - Passengers are encouraged to bring a **small e-cylinder or POC (Portable Oxygen Concentrators)** rather than medical oxygen on-board.
 - Pilots can identify **DOT approved oxygen** by the DOT number stamped on the neck of the oxygen bottle or on a band around the neck of the bottle
 - Commercial carriers may allow POC but do not allow medical oxygen.
- What medical equipment is the patient required to travel with?
- Does the person have a compromised immune system?
- Is the person pregnant? If so, how many weeks gestation? Explain that AFC will not fly any pregnant Passenger (patient or companion) without the consent of a physician.
 - The alternative of a commercial flight may be considered with doctor's written approval on the AFC Medical Release and if AFC has available commercial resources at the time of the request.
 - Note: Premature babies or at-risk infants (such as low weight for their age) should not be flown without physician consent.
- Is the person traveling to surgery?
- Is the person able to walk to and board a small aircraft?
- What physical assistance does the person need to walk and board the aircraft?
- Does this person need a companion or can they travel alone?
- Does this person require a pressurized aircraft?
- AFC Coordinators may ask for **additional verification** of information or may refuse a request based on responses to screening questions, 3rd party contact or information from their physician.
- Explain that volunteer Pilots and Pilots from organizations we work cooperatively with are qualified to fly these charitable flights; that **each Pilot is donating the cost of the flight** and **they cannot accept money for the flight** under federal aviation rules. Pilots are also taking time away from work or family. **Passengers are encouraged to thank their Pilot for assisting them.**
- Should the Passengers ask if they can donate to the Pilots; let them know that they are **welcome to donate to the Angel Flight Central organization to help coordinate flights for others** in the future to have access to flights; but **their flights is at no cost to them.**
- Does AFC have **available resources** at the time of the request?
 - Are the **number of Passengers** traveling, the **individual weight** of each Passenger and **the total weight** of all Passengers plus a maximum of **50 pounds of baggage** reasonable for small general aviation aircraft?
 - If not, does AFC have larger planes and willing Pilots near their origin, hand-off and destination?
 - Should AFC re-direct the request to another resource?

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Explain to Passengers that these are **small non-pressurized aircraft** flown by volunteer Pilots
 - Note: A Coordinator makes the determination if a pressurized aircraft is needed based on the physicians medical release; not the request of the Passenger and the Coordinator determines if a pressurized aircraft and Pilot are available for any given request.

- What **previous experience** do the Passengers have with flying on planes with 4-6 seats?
- Explain that most planes typically have two to three **(2-3) seats available for Passengers**; which limits the number of companions.
- Does the Passenger have a **companion/caregiver** that needs to fly with them?
 - Explain they must be able to **manage their own medications or medical equipment** on board.
 - A Coordinator may advise the Passenger to have a **reliable companion** based on responses to screening questions and physician's response on the medical release.
- Have any Passengers had a bad cold, ear pain or head congestion?
 - Explain how pressure changes affect these conditions and advise Passengers to report symptoms to a Coordinator before their trip.
- Explain that angel flights are **not "guaranteed"** and all Passengers must have a **back-up plan** for both outbound and return flights.
 - Sometimes AFC or linking organizations are **unable to fill flight legs**.
 - The **weather** or a number of **unexpected circumstances can cancel** a flight at the last minute.
 - They should consider their **ability to fund** a longer hotel stay or alternative means of transportation home if the angel flight is cancelled and cannot be immediately rescheduled.
 - They are **responsible for their own ground transportation, lodging and cost of meals**.
 - Passengers are advised that without a back-up plan a flight that must be cancelled will require them to reschedule their appointment.

SAFETY QUESTIONS

- Are all Passengers able to **walk** and mobile enough to **step 18-20 inches on/off a slanted surface** and **bend to enter/exit** the small plane; with minimal assistance?
 - Children's wheelchairs, collapsible walkers, crutches and canes are OK
 - Adult wheelchairs and bulky medical equipment are too large for small planes.
- Are all Passengers able **to sit upright, wear a standard seat belt**; or appropriate safety-restraint, in an airplane seat for the duration of the flight (that may not lean back or allow for leg elevation)?
- What limitations do they report? (Not all Pilots have **seatbelt extenders** for Passengers of size.)
- Is there a medical reason they cannot **sit without the need for a restroom** for the duration of at least one (1) flight-leg (several hours)? Discuss the need for child or adult diapers if appropriate to their medical condition.
- If the **patient is a child**; is the legal parent/guardian traveling with the child? If not, a chain of custody clearance must be obtained by the Coordinator.
- How much does each child weigh? Can they **bring a car seat** for their child?
 - Emphasize that **EACH child, weighing 40 pounds or less, MUST be in a car seat** for take-off, landing and during flight. Each car seat must be fastened securely to the aircraft seat.
 - No children are **on laps** during take-off, landing or during flight.
 - Children weighing above 40 pounds must be in an **appropriate safety restraint** adjusted to their size. **No booster seats** for any size children.
 - Parents should check the car seat requirements for ground transportation at their destination.
- Can the **parent/guardian lift the child** on and off the airplane?
- Can all Passengers **speak English** so that the Pilot is able to communicate with them? If not discuss alternatives.

PASSENGER AGREEMENT

- Have all Passengers accurately reported their **weight/height** and the weight/height of their companions?
- Do Passengers agree to bring **ONLY 50 pounds of baggage TOTAL** for all Passengers on-board?
 - Explain that linking Pilots or their return Pilots may not be able to transport additional weight so any weight above 50 pounds must be left at the airport. Medical equipment onboard **MUST** be reported to the Coordinator and cannot be brought on the aircraft at the last minute.
 - Explain that Passengers and baggage will be placed in the plane, by the Pilot, according to the **weight and balance** required for the specific plane they will be flying in.
 - Explain that **changing any Passenger** for another person, misrepresenting Passenger or baggage weight or not reporting medical equipment, during screening, may cause the flight to be cancelled. An AFC Pilot or Coordinator may cancel flights even up to departure for any reason that may present a safety issue for any Pilot, linking Pilot or Passenger.
- Do Passengers agree to **ONLY bring the companion** whom they have listed on their request?
 - Explain that **one companion may NOT be substituted for another** and additional Passengers may NOT be added on to the flight at the last minute. (Pilots must figure weight and balance of their aircraft with their flight planning)
- Have Passengers arranged for their own ground transportation and overnight lodging?
 - Explain that the Pilot is not expected to provide ground transportation & overnight lodging or the cost of meals for Passengers. They are already contributing a substantial amount to pay for the Passengers' transportation and taking their personal time to help them.
 - Do the Passengers have sufficient funds for their meals and ground transportation?
- Do Passengers understand that if **weather or unforeseen circumstances cancels their trip** home they should call the AFC office to see if other arrangements can be made?
 - Do Passengers have the AFC office phone number and the after-hours pager number for their trip?
 - Do Passengers have sufficient funds for additional overnight lodging or alternative transportation if the flight is delayed or has to be rescheduled?
- Do all Passengers agree to sign the **Liability Release** of their own free will, before departure? (View on the Passenger Section of the AFC website ahead of time.)
- Do Passengers understand and agree to **AFC's Security Protocol**? (View on the Passenger Section of the AFC website ahead of time.)
 - Do all Passengers have a **legal form of identification** and are willing to show the Pilot?
 - Are all Passengers will disclose weapons or contraband and allow the **pilot to search their baggage**, if the Pilot requests; before boarding the plane?
- Do Passengers agree to **comply with the Safety Instructions** that will be sent to them by the AFC Coordinator in preparation for their flight and the **Pilot's Instructions** to fly on their aircraft
- Encourage the Passenger to **thank the Pilot** for their flight.

PASSENGER INSTRUCTIONS PRIOR TO FLIGHT

- Passengers are given instructions prior to their flight which may also be reinforced by the Pilot when making contact with the Passenger.

- Validation of all phone numbers listed on the itinerary including cell number for travel days or alternative contact information while on their trip. Coordinator verifies that Passenger's voicemail or email is valid and accessible to anyone calling them (Pilot, Coordinator, etc.)
- Only those persons whose names are listed on the itinerary are allowed to board the airplane.
- Passengers are reminded that baggage **MUST** be limited to 50 pounds total for the flight.
- Passengers are informed that if they arrive at the airport with a different companion or excess baggage; the Pilot has the right to cancel the flight and must call the Coordinator.
- Passenger back-up plans are confirmed and recorded. (This may be to cancel or reschedule.)
- Verification of all Passenger weights (especially if the time since initial request is lengthy)
- Verify that Passengers have ground transportation, resources for overnight stay and food.
- Verify, origin, destination, (FBO's if appropriate); where they will meet their Pilot(s).
 - The Pilot reserves the right to choose the FBO for fuel discounts or reduced ground fees and should inform the Coordinator and Passengers of any changes before flight day.
- Passengers are notified when Pilots are assigned to the flight and when the flight is filled.
 - Passengers are notified if there is difficulty filling legs or there are changes to the flight.
- Passengers are informed that the 1st leg Pilot will call them to discuss the details of the flight such as when/where to meet at the airport
- Passengers are reminded they must carry their ID to board the plane and allow the Pilot to search their baggage if requested.
- Passengers are provided the 24/7 voice pager number for evenings/weekend changes to flights.
- Passengers are reminded that they must be on-time at the airport at the designated time the Pilot requests. They **MUST** call the AFC office immediately, if unanticipated circumstances occur which delays connection with their Pilot(s); especially on the day of flight(s).
- Passengers must call the Coordinator **IMMEDIATELY** to cancel or reschedule a flight or for requested changes from what was documented during screening. This may include: companions, phone numbers, medical status, dates/times of flights, appointments, etc.
- Itineraries are confidential to protect both Pilot and Passenger information.